

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An electronic camera comprising:  
a mode setting device that sets a first mode for a function which is unrelated to functions of the camera; and  
a controlling device that prohibits the camera from capturing an image when said first mode is set by said mode setting device.
2. The electronic camera as defined in claim 1, wherein said first mode is for at least one of the following: an audio play function for playing music files recorded in a storage medium in the camera, an electronic book function, an electronic notebook function, and a portable phone function.
3. The electronic camera as defined in claim 1, wherein said controlling device does not accept an input from a switch of the camera when said first mode is set by said mode setting device, said switch being provided to a body of the camera for the functions of the camera.
4. The electronic camera as defined in claim 1, wherein said mode setting device chooses between said first mode and a second mode for the functions of the camera.
5. The electronic camera as defined in claim 4, wherein:  
said second mode is a camera mode which includes said recording mode and the play mode; and  
the electronic camera further comprises another mode setting device that chooses between said recording mode and the play mode when the camera mode is set.
6. The electronic camera as defined in claim 4, wherein:  
said mode setting device is a slide switch which is locked to set the first mode when the slide switch moves in a first direction; and  
said mode setting device is unlocked to alternately set said second operation mode and an OFF mode for turning off power of the camera when the slide switch moves in a second direction which is opposite to said first direction.

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7. The electronic camera as defined in claim 6, wherein:  
said second mode is a camera mode which includes said recording mode and the play mode; and  
the electronic camera further comprises another mode setting device that chooses between said recording mode and the play mode when the camera mode is set.
8. The electronic camera as defined in claim 1, further comprising:  
a lens cover for a taking lens; and  
a lens cover driving device that opens and closes said lens cover,  
wherein the controlling device controls said lens cover driving device to close said lens cover when said first mode is set by said mode setting device.
9. The electronic camera as defined in claim 8, wherein said first mode is for at least one of the following: an audio play function for playing music files recorded in a storage medium in the camera, an electronic book function, an electronic notebook function, and a portable phone function.
10. The electronic camera as defined in claim 8, wherein said controlling device does not accept an input from a switch of the camera when said first mode is set by said mode setting device, said switch being provided to a body of the camera for the functions of the camera.
11. The electronic camera as defined in claim 8, wherein:  
said electronic camera further has a recording mode for recording image data in a storage medium in the camera, and a play mode for playing an image on a monitor according to the image data stored in the storage medium in the camera; and  
said controlling device controls said lens cover driving device so that said lens cover is opened when said recording mode is set, and does not move the lens cover when said play mode is set.
12. The electronic camera as defined in claim 8, wherein said mode setting device chooses between said first mode and a second mode for the functions of the camera.

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13. The electronic camera as defined in claim 12, wherein:

said second mode is a camera mode which includes said recording mode and the play mode; and

the electronic camera further comprises another mode setting device that chooses between said recording mode and the play mode when the camera mode is set.

14. The electronic camera as defined in claim 12, wherein:

said mode setting device is a slide switch which is locked to set the first mode when the slide switch moves in a first direction; and

said mode setting device is unlocked to alternately set said second operation mode and an OFF mode for turning off power of the camera when the slide switch moves in a second direction which is opposite to said first direction.

15. The electronic camera as defined in claim 14, wherein:

said second mode is a camera mode which includes said recording mode and the play mode; and

the electronic camera further comprises another mode setting device that chooses between said recording mode and the play mode when the camera mode is set.

16. The electronic camera as defined in claim 8, wherein said taking lens is collapsed before said lens cover is closed.

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